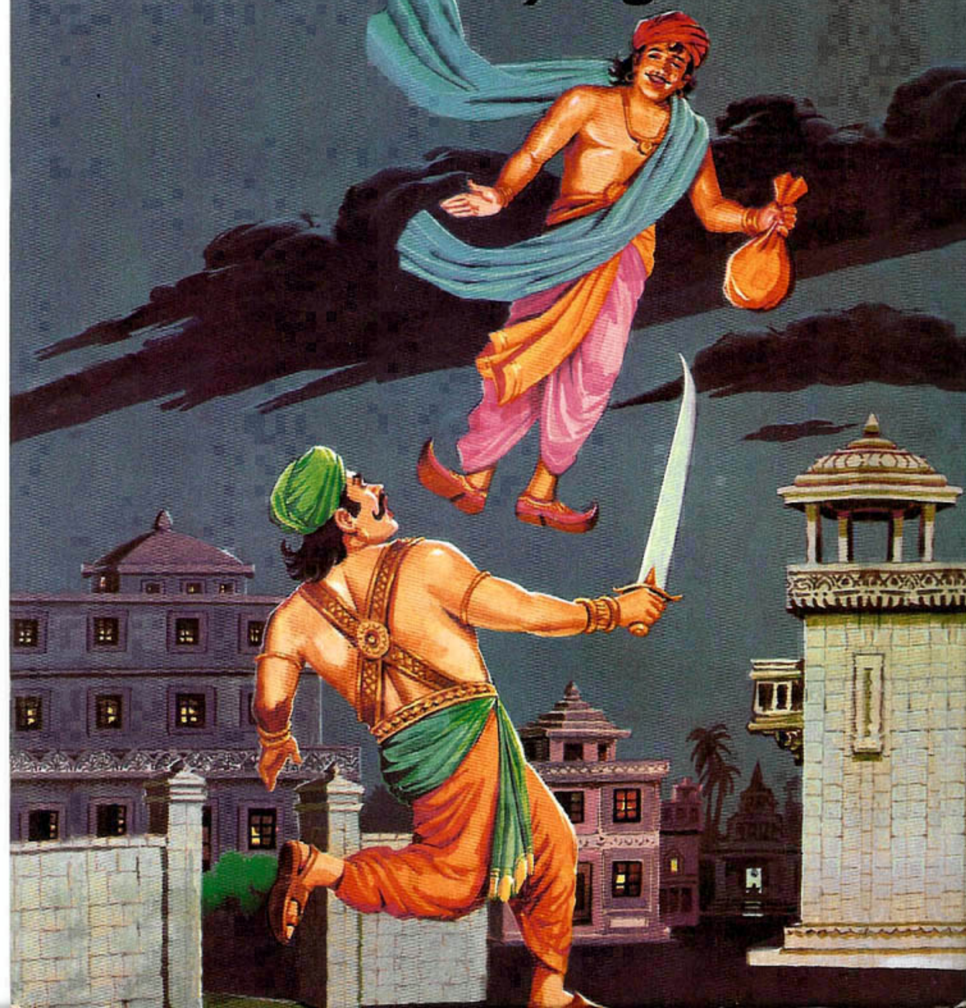
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

NO. 578 RS. 30

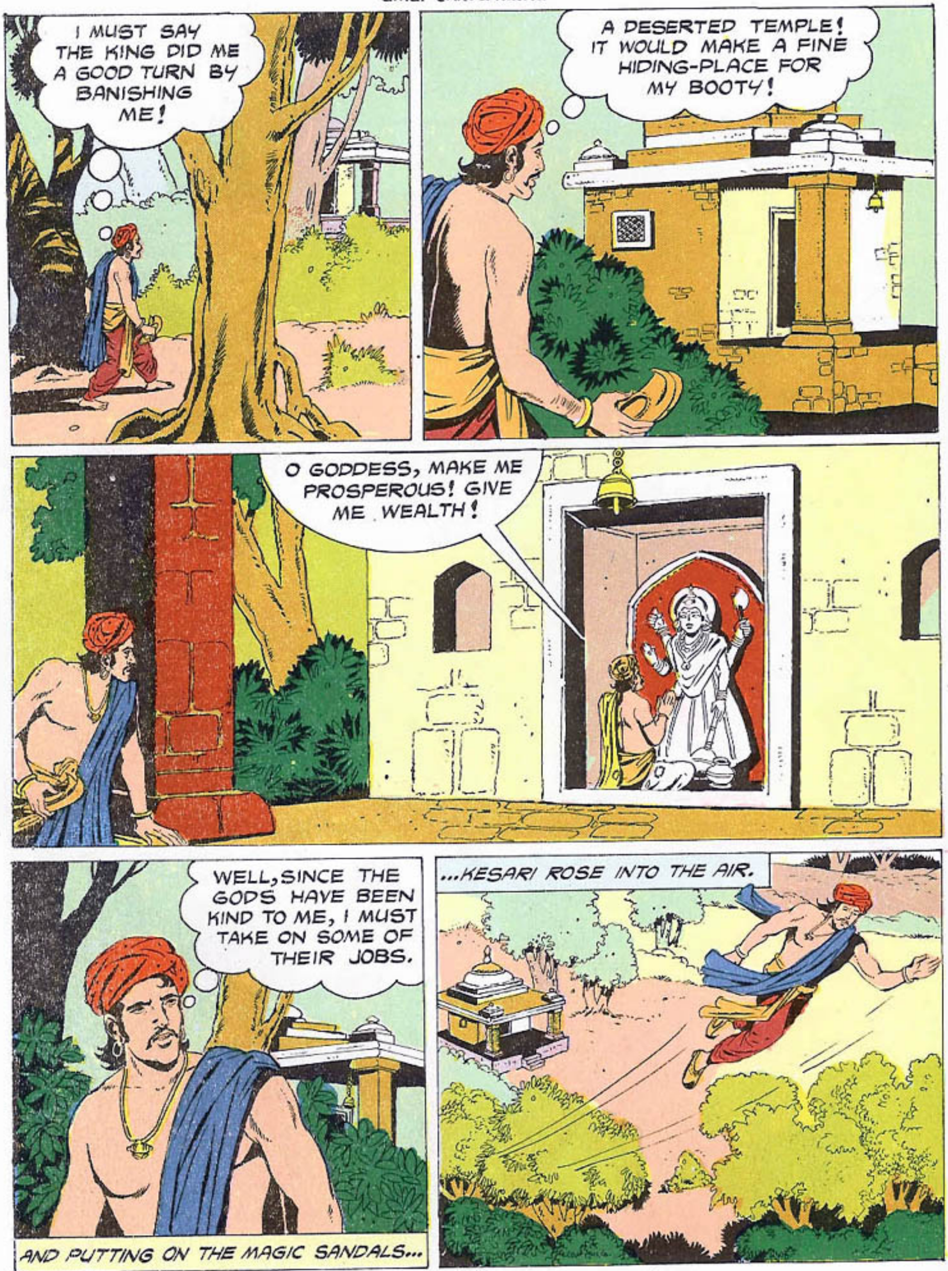
Kesari the Flying Thief




KESARI THE FLYING THIEF
KESARI, THE INCORRIGIBLE THIEF, HAD BEEN BANISHED FROM THE CITY WITH THE WARNING THAT IF HE RETURNED AND WAS CAUGHT, HE WOULD BE HANGED.
I DARE NOT GO BACK TO THE CITY. AT LEAST NOT FOR A FEW DAYS! IF THEY CATCH ME...
...I'VE HAD IT. HEY! WHAT'S THAT MAN DOING UP THERE?
COULD THE KING HAVE SENT HIM AFTER ME?
HE'S COMING DOWN! BUT HOW DID HE GET UP THERE?

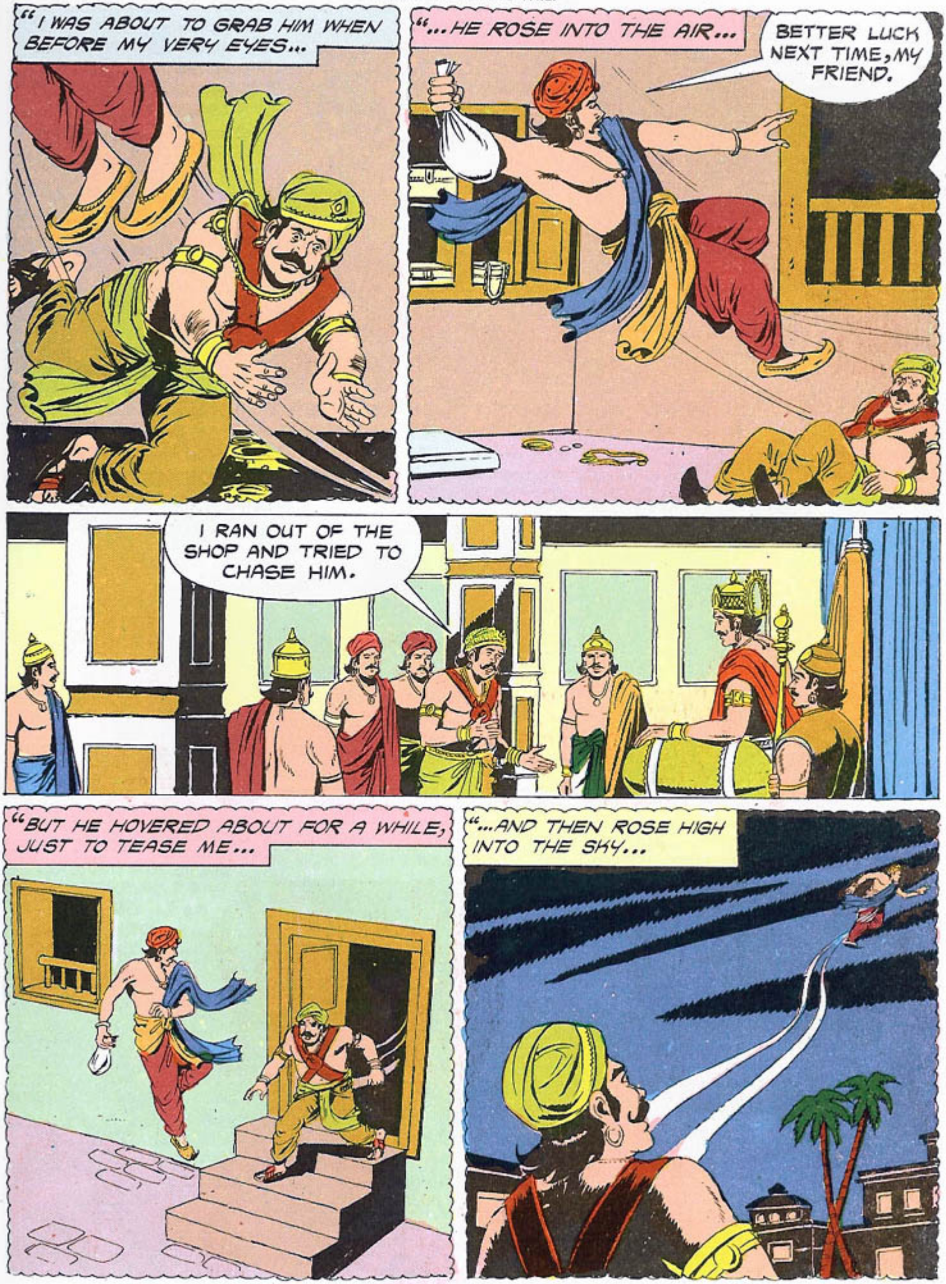

IT'S THE SANDALS! HE'S REMOVING THEM!
HE CAN'T TOUCH EARTH WITHOUT REMOVING THEM!
HEY!

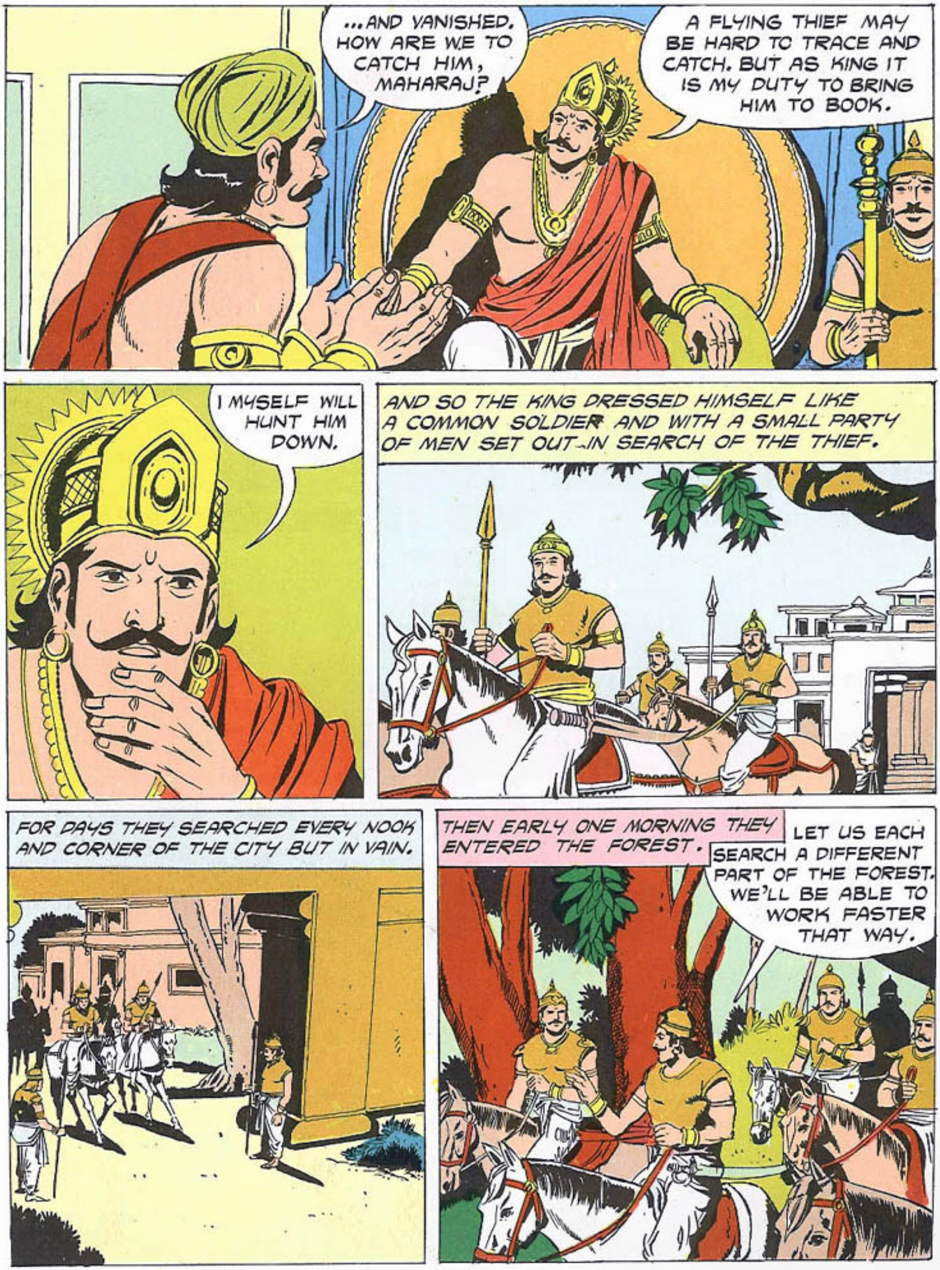

HEY! COME BACK! THOSE ARE MY SANDALS!
WERE, MY FRIEND, WERE!
WHO SAYS THIEVING IS BAD? THE GODS THEMSELVES APPROVE.
IF THEY DIDN'T, WOULD THEY HAVE SENT ME THIS GIFT TO MAKE MY JOB EASIER?


I MUST SAY THE KING DID ME A GOOD TURN BY BANISHING ME!
A DESERTED TEMPLE! IT WOULD MAKE A FINE HIDING-PLACE FOR MY BOOTY!
O GODDESS, MAKE ME PROSPEROUS! GIVE ME WEALTH!
WELL, SINCE THE GODS HAVE BEEN KIND TO ME, I MUST TAKE ON SOME OF THEIR JOBS.
AND PUTTING ON THE MAGIC SANDALS...
...KESARI ROSE INTO THE AIR.


BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT DAY —
HERE! THIS IS FOR YOUR DEVOTEE.
AND KESARI LEFT.
A LITTLE LATER —
AH! THE GODDESS HAS ANSWERED MY PRAYERS!
MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE —
MAHARAJ, ALL THE PRECIOUS GEMS IN MY SHOP HAVE BEEN STOLEN!
SOMEBODY BROKE INTO MY HOUSE LAST NIGHT, MAHARAJ, AND TOOK AWAY EVERY PIECE OF MY WIFE'S JEWELRY!


SUMMON THE KOTWAL!
NO NEED FOR THAT, MAHARAJ. I WOULD HAVE COME EARLIER BUT I HAD A BAD NIGHT AND OVERSLEPT.
THE THIEF LED ME A MERRY DANCE.
THE THIEF? HAVE YOU CAUGHT HIM?
I'D HAVE TO HAVE WINGS FOR THAT, MAHARAJ!
WINGS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
"I SAW A MAN PROWLING IN THE JEWELLER'S SHOP.
"I ENTERED THE SHOP. IT WAS DARK AND I COULD SEE ONLY HIS FORM NOT HIS FACE.


"I WAS ABOUT TO GRAB HIM WHEN BEFORE MY VERY EYES...
"...HE ROSE INTO THE AIR...
BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, MY FRIEND.
I RAN OUT OF THE SHOP AND TRIED TO CHASE HIM.
"BUT HE HOVERED ABOUT FOR A WHILE, JUST TO TEASE ME...
"...AND THEN ROSE HIGH INTO THE SKY...


...AND VANISHED. HOW ARE WE TO CATCH HIM, MAHARAJ?
A FLYING THIEF MAY BE HARD TO TRACE AND CATCH. BUT AS KING IT IS MY DUTY TO BRING HIM TO BOOK.
I MYSELF WILL HUNT HIM DOWN.
AND SO THE KING DRESSED HIMSELF LIKE A COMMON SOLDIER AND WITH A SMALL PARTY OF MEN SET OUT IN SEARCH OF THE THIEF.
FOR DAYS THEY SEARCHED EVERY NOOK AND CORNER OF THE CITY BUT IN VAIN.
THEN EARLY ONE MORNING THEY ENTERED THE FOREST.
LET US EACH SEARCH A DIFFERENT PART OF THE FOREST. WE'LL BE ABLE TO WORK FASTER THAT WAY.


AFTER THE KING HAD GONE A LITTLE WAY HE DECIDED TO REST FOR A WHILE.
MM-M-M! THE FRAGRANCE OF MUSK AND... SANDALWOOD?
IT'S COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION. THERE MUST BE A TEMPLE SOMEWHERE THERE.
AH! I WAS RIGHT.
THERE'S SOMEBODY WORSHIPPING THE GODDESS!
THE MAN'S WORSHIP WAS SOON OVER. AS HE TURNED TO LEAVE—
ARE YOU A PRIEST, MY GOOD MAN?
I AM A MERCHANT BY PROFESSION.
TILL A FEW DAYS AGO, I WAS A POOR WRETCH.
AND THEN THE GODDESS ANSWERED MY PRAYERS WITH A HEAP OF GEMS.
GEMS!

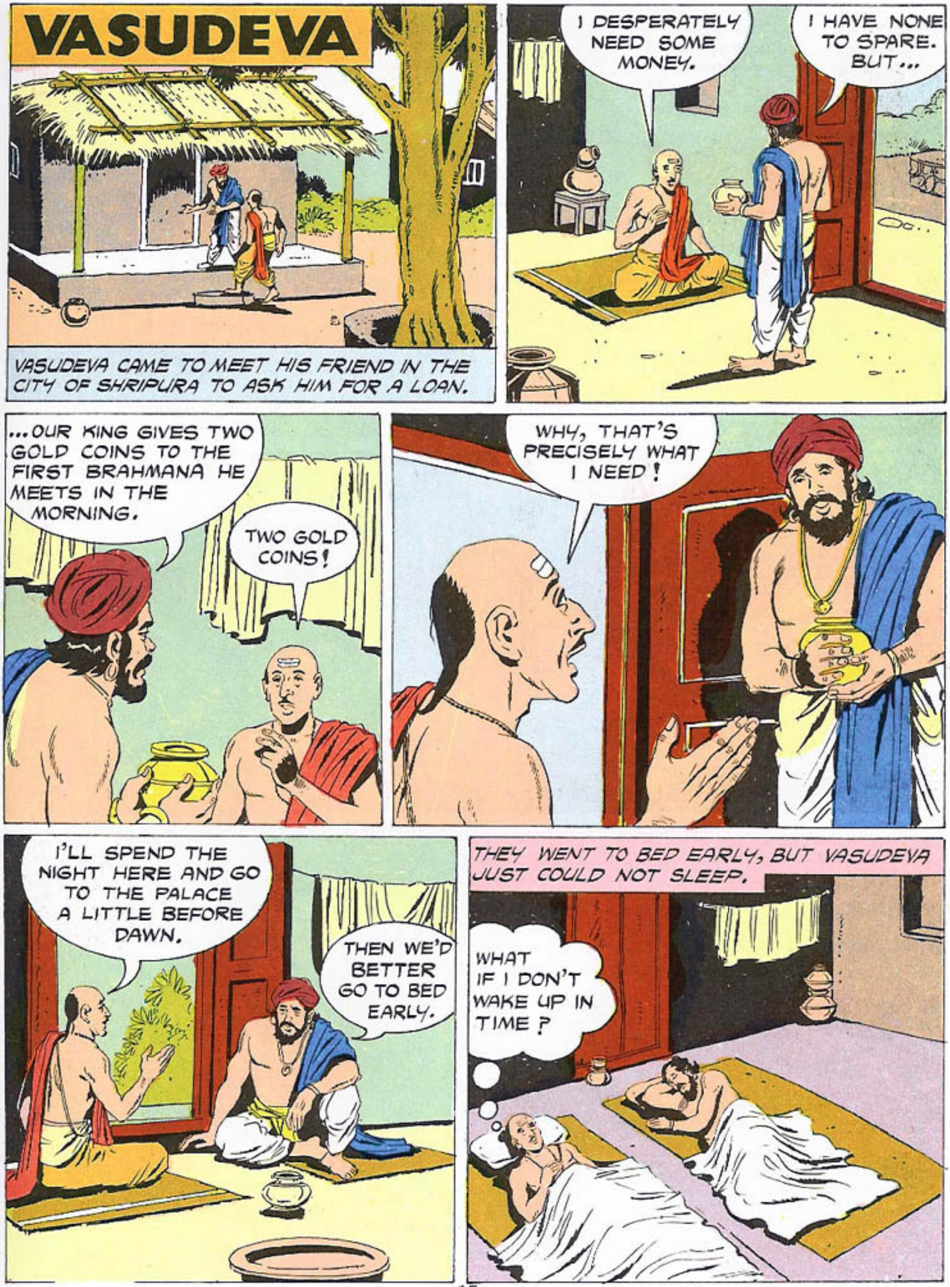

NOW IN MY GRATITUDE I COME TO WORSHIP HER EVERY MORNING AND LEAVE OFFERINGS OF FOOD FOR HER WHICH SHE HONOURS ME BY ACCEPTING.
HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE ACCEPTS THEM?
BECAUSE WHEN I COME THE NEXT DAY THEY ARE GONE.
HMM-M-M.
OH! I SEE.
WELL, SIR, I MUST BE GOING NOW. I HAVE MY WORK TO ATTEND TO.
THANKS TO YOU, MY GOOD MAN, I DON'T THINK I'LL NEED TO SEARCH ANY MORE. I THINK I'VE FOUND MY THIEF.
AND THE KING HID HIMSELF INSIDE THE DARK TEMPLE AND WAITED. SOON—
FOOTSTEPS! HE'S COMING!
I'LL GRAB HIM AS HE GOES OUT.


THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL, GODDESS!
MM-M-M! THAT WAS DELICIOUS.
NOW OFF TO WORK.
HA! YOU WON'T ESCAPE THIS TIME!
IT'S KESARI!
THE KING!


THE KING WAS AS STARTLED BY HIS DISCOVERY AS KESARI WAS AT BEING CAUGHT.
KESARI WAS THE FIRST TO RECOVER.
I DON'T HAVE THE SANDALS AND THE KING WON'T GIVE UP TILL HE'S CAUGHT ME.
IF HE CATCHES ME, I'LL BE HANGED.
OF WHAT USE WILL ALL THE WEALTH I'VE STOLEN BE THEN?
WILL IT GIVE ME MY LIFE?


OH! WHAT A USELESS BURDEN WEALTH IS!
A MONK! HE SEEMS TO BE MEDITATING.
I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A PEACEFUL EXPRESSION BEFORE. I'LL SIT THERE BESIDE HIM.
HE HAS NO WEALTH. NO WONDER HE HAS PEACE.
THE KING'S MEN MEANWHILE HAD JOINED HIM AND ALL OF THEM CAME IN PURSUIT OF KESARI.
AH! THERE'S THE SCOUNDREL PRETENDING TO BE A MONK! HA!


BUT WHEN HE CAME NEARER...
... THE KING WHO HAD COME TO CAPTURE WAS HIMSELF CAPTURED.
NO! THIS IS NOT THE KESARI I SET OUT TO CATCH. FORGIVE ME, O ENLIGHTENED ONE.
WHAT FORCE BROUGHT OVER THE CHANGE I DO NOT KNOW...
...BUT I DO KNOW THAT I AM IN THE PRESENCE OF A MAN WHO HAS FOUND PEACE.
I SALUTE YOU, NOBLE ONE.
KESARI THE THIEF HAD, INDEED, TRANSFORMED INTO KESARI THE ENLIGHTENED ONE.

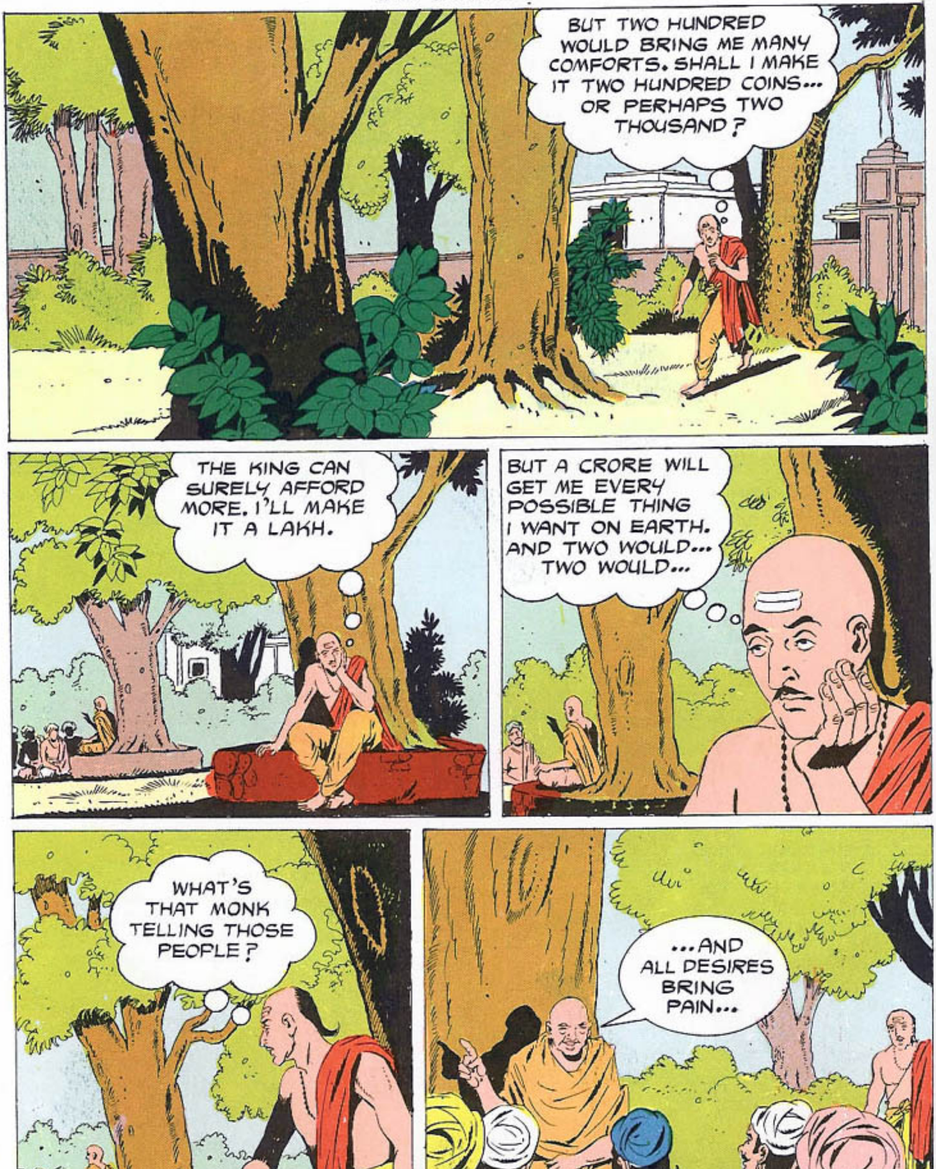

VASUDEVA
VASUDEVA CAME TO MEET HIS FRIEND IN THE CITY OF SHRIPURA TO ASK HIM FOR A LOAN.
I DESPERATELY NEED SOME MONEY.
I HAVE NONE TO SPARE. BUT...
...OUR KING GIVES TWO GOLD COINS TO THE FIRST BRAHMANA HE MEETS IN THE MORNING.
TWO GOLD COINS!
WHY, THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I NEED!
I'LL SPEND THE NIGHT HERE AND GO TO THE PALACE A LITTLE BEFORE DAWN.
THEN WE'D BETTER GO TO BED EARLY.
THEY WENT TO BED EARLY, BUT VASUDEVA JUST COULD NOT SLEEP.
WHAT IF I DON'T WAKE UP IN TIME?

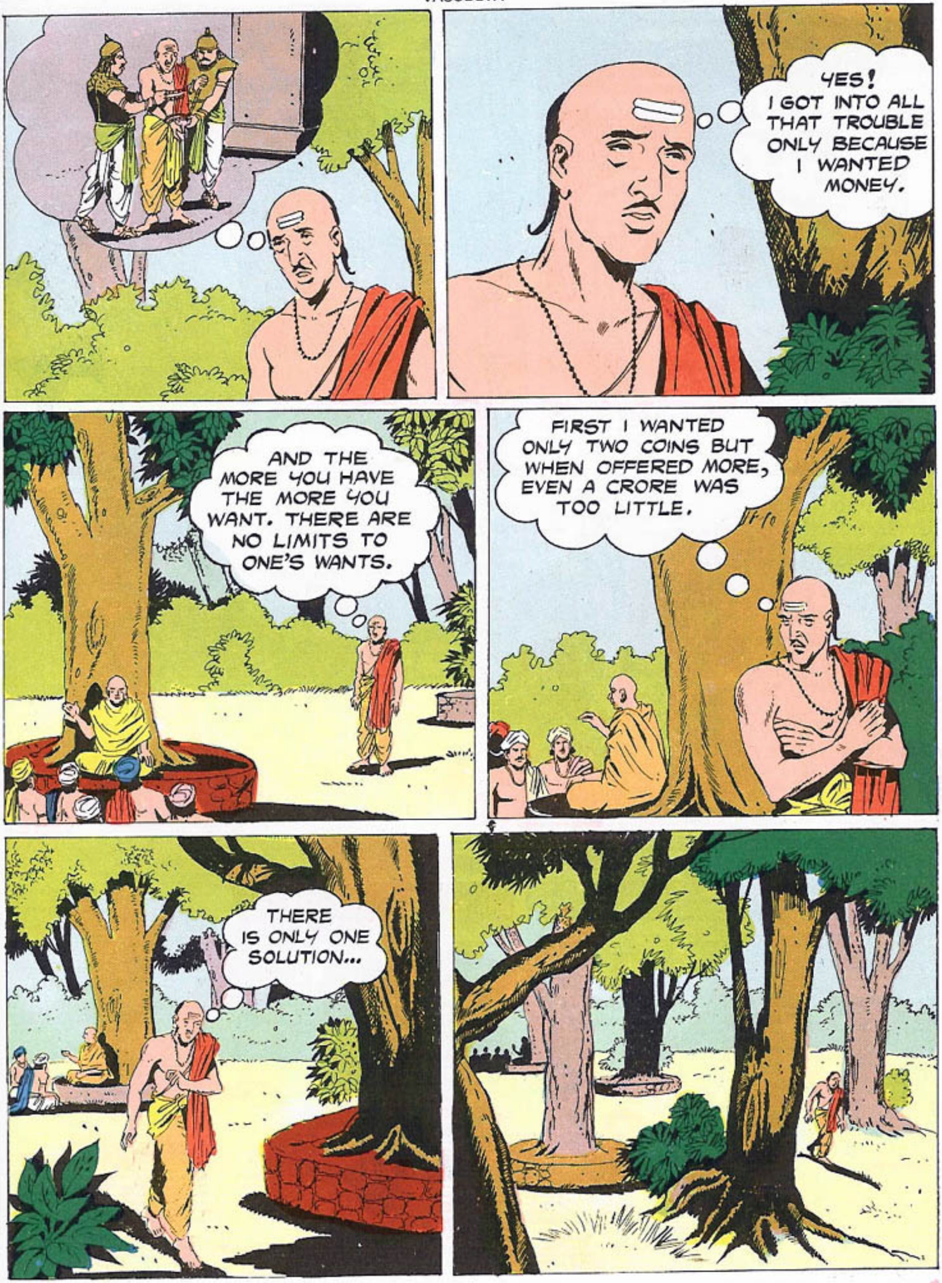

WHAT IF ANOTHER BRAHMANA GETS THERE BEFORE I DO AND RECEIVES THE MONEY?
ZZZ...
THE BEST THING WOULD BE NOT TO SLEEP AT ALL!
ZZZ...
I'LL GO TO THE PALACE RIGHT AWAY AND WAIT OUTSIDE. THEN I'M SURE TO BE THE FIRST.
Z... Z... Z...
SUDDENLY—
DON'T TRY TO STRUGGLE!
HEY! WHAT...
LET ME GO!

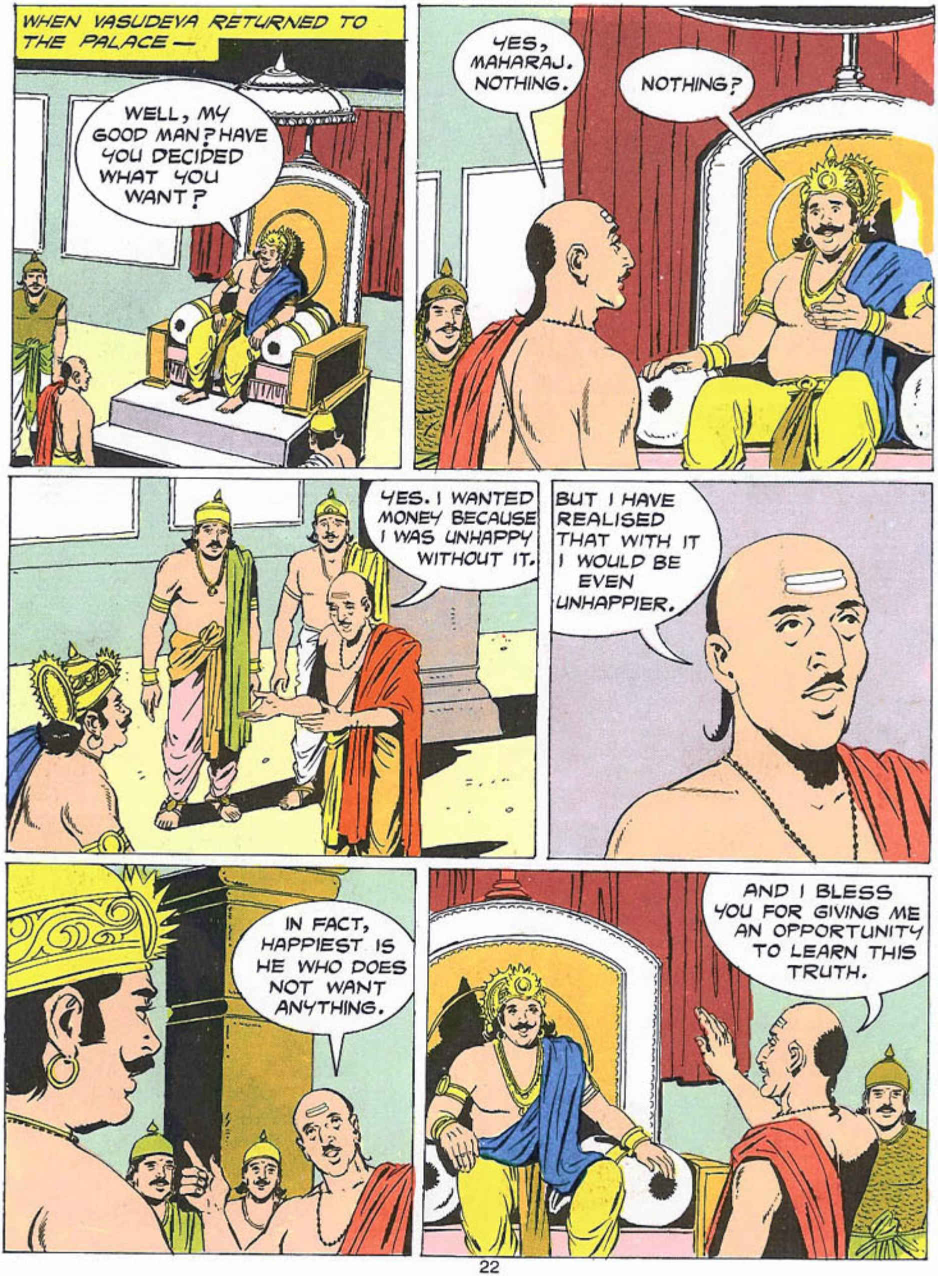

I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING.
I ONLY WANTED TO SEE THE KING!
YOU DID, DID YOU?
DON'T WORRY YOU'LL SEE HIM. IN GOOD TIME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LET ME GO! I'M INNOCENT.
PLEASE LET ME GO! PLEASE!


THE NEXT MORNING HE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING.
THIS IS THE DANGEROUS SPY WE CAUGHT LAST NIGHT, MAHARAJ.
PLEASE LET ME GO, MAHARAJ. I AM NOT A SPY.
THEN WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUTSIDE THE PALACE AT MIDNIGHT?
I WAS MAKING SURE NO ONE GOT THERE BEFORE I DID.
FOR WHAT?
TO RECEIVE THE TWO GOLD COINS YOU GIVE TO THE FIRST BRAHMANA YOU SEE IN THE DAY!
POOR MAN! ALL THAT FOR JUST TWO GOLD COINS!

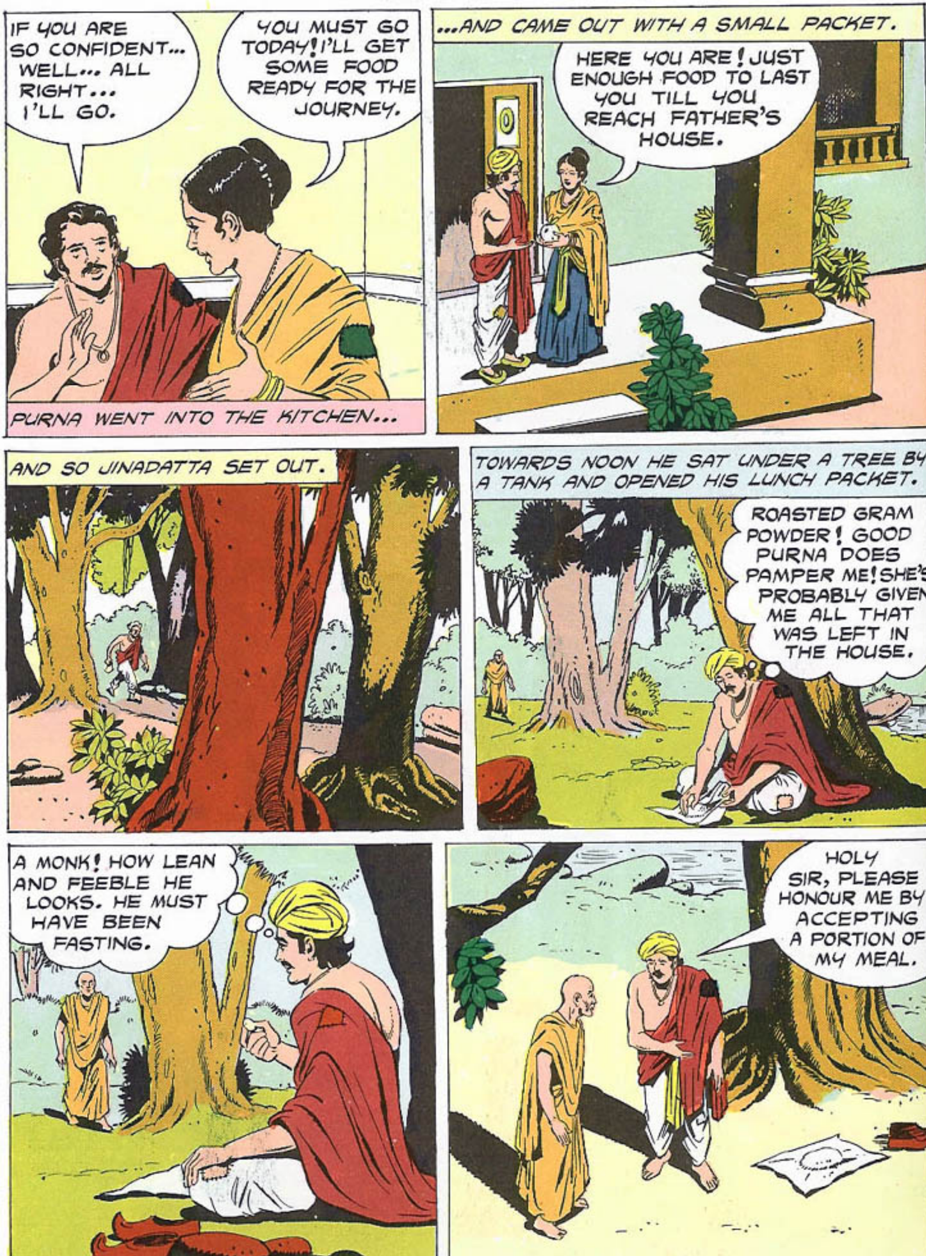

MY GOOD MAN, WHY TWO GOLD COINS? I SHALL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.
ANYTHING I WANT, MAHARAJ! THEN MAY I HAVE...
... MAY I HAVE...
YES?
MAHARAJ, I NEED SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT I WANT.
TAKE YOUR TIME, MY GOOD MAN. COME BACK TO ME WHEN YOU'VE DECIDED.
TWENTY COINS WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL MY NEEDS.

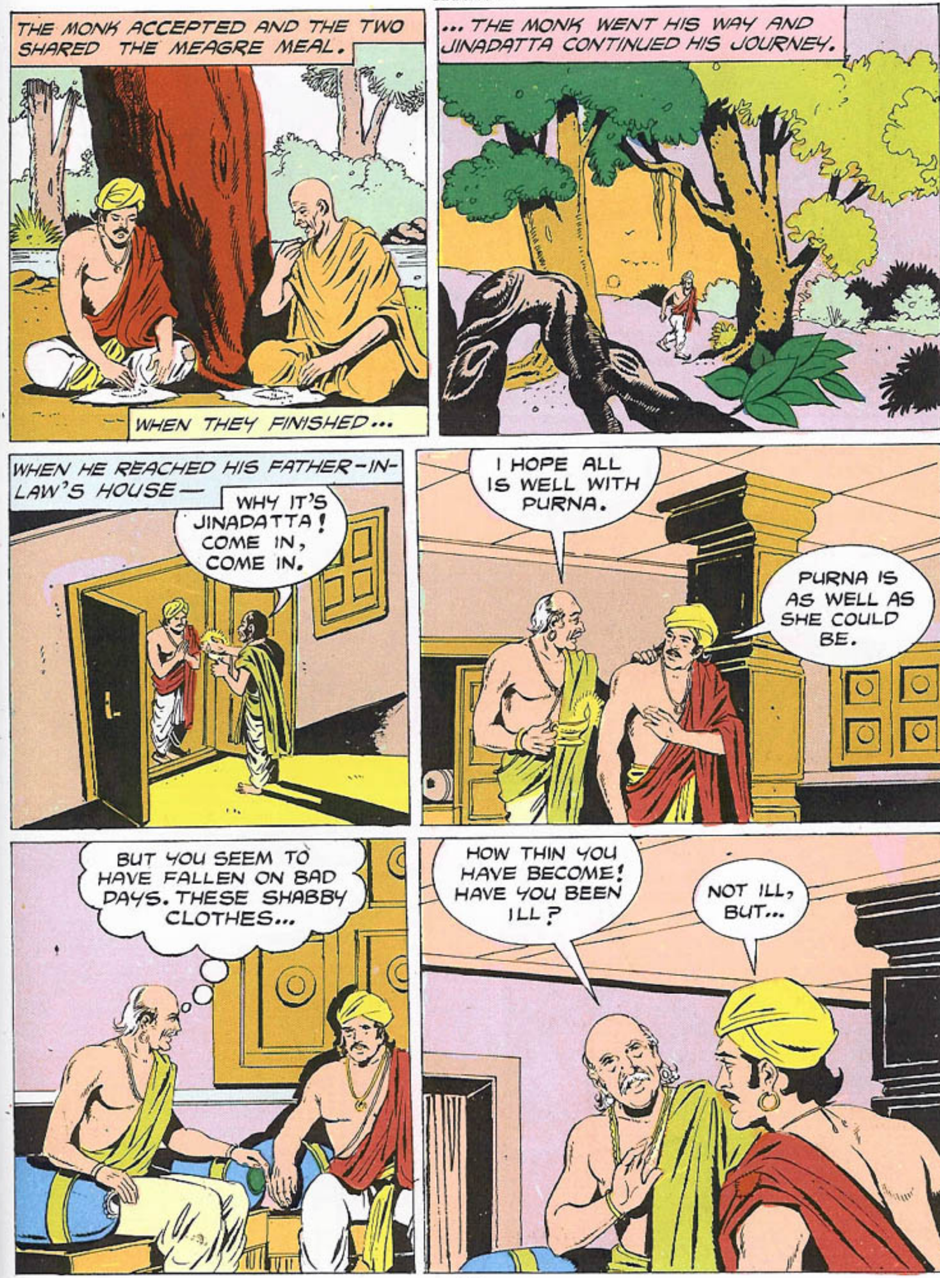

BUT TWO HUNDRED WOULD BRING ME MANY COMFORTS. SHALL I MAKE IT TWO HUNDRED COINS... OR PERHAPS TWO THOUSAND?
THE KING CAN SURELY AFFORD MORE. I'LL MAKE IT A LAKH.
BUT A CRORE WILL GET ME EVERY POSSIBLE THING I WANT ON EARTH. AND TWO WOULD... TWO WOULD...
WHAT'S THAT MONK TELLING THOSE PEOPLE?
...AND ALL DESIRES BRING PAIN...

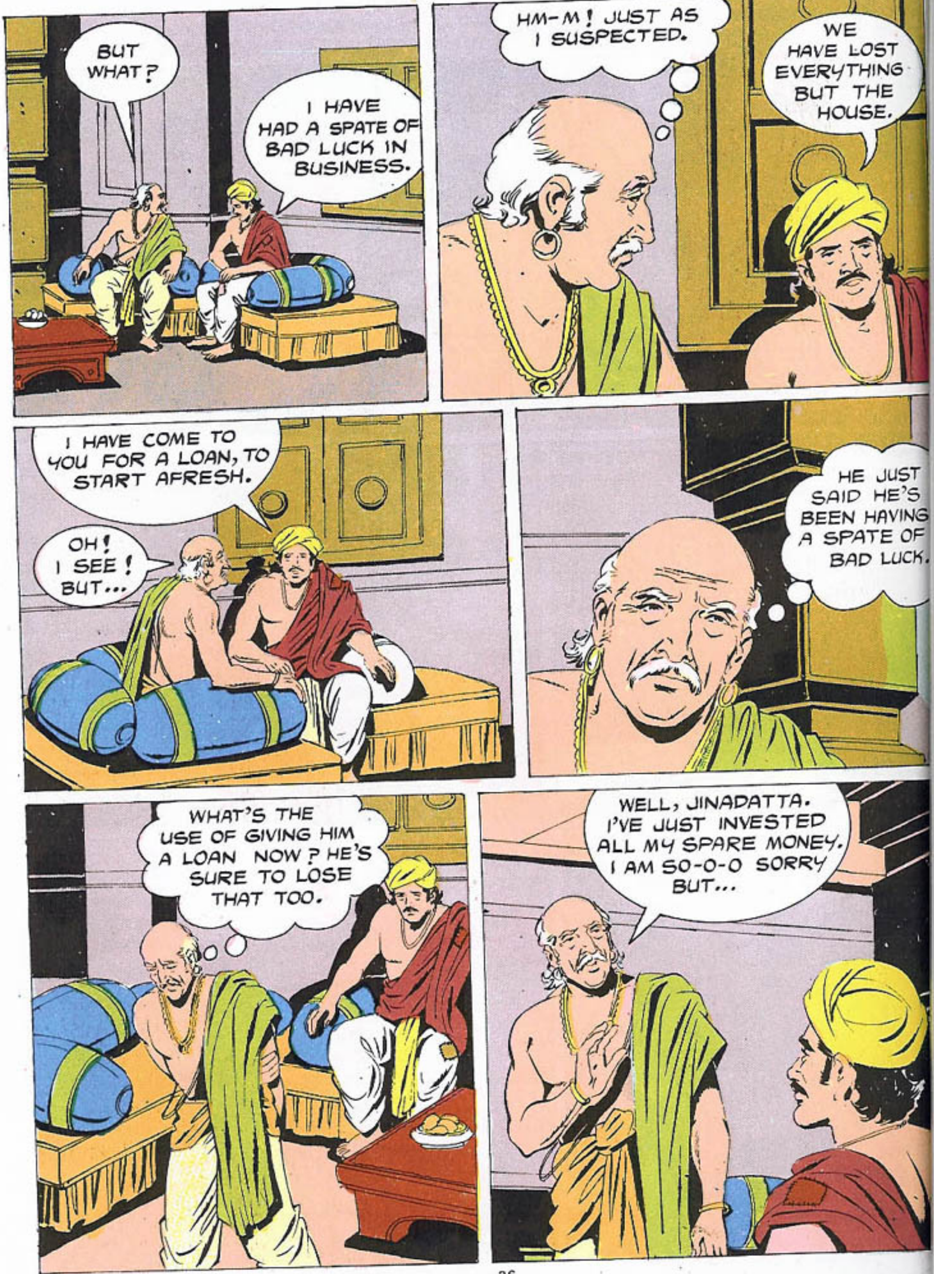

YES!
I GOT INTO ALL THAT TROUBLE ONLY BECAUSE I WANTED MONEY.
AND THE MORE YOU HAVE THE MORE YOU WANT. THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO ONE'S WANTS.
FIRST I WANTED ONLY TWO COINS BUT WHEN OFFERED MORE, EVEN A CRORE WAS TOO LITTLE.
THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION...


WHEN VASUDEVA RETURNED TO THE PALACE —
WELL, MY GOOD MAN? HAVE YOU DECIDED WHAT YOU WANT?
YES, MAHARAJ. NOTHING.
NOTHING?
YES. I WANTED MONEY BECAUSE I WAS UNHAPPY WITHOUT IT.
BUT I HAVE REALISED THAT WITH IT I WOULD BE EVEN UNHAPPIER.
IN FACT, HAPPIEST IS HE WHO DOES NOT WANT ANYTHING.
AND I BLESS YOU FOR GIVING ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THIS TRUTH.


JINADATTA
JINADATTA, A RICH BUT GENEROUS MERCHANT OF POTTANAPURA, HAD FALLEN ON BAD DAYS.
WHY DON'T YOU GO TO MY FATHER AND ASK HIM FOR A LOAN?
NO! NO, PURNA. I CAN'T TAKE MONEY FROM YOUR FATHER.
WHY NOT? IT'S ONLY A LOAN. YOU WILL REPAY IT WHEN BUSINESS IMPROVES.
WHAT IF HE REFUSES?
HE WON'T. I KNOW MY FATHER.

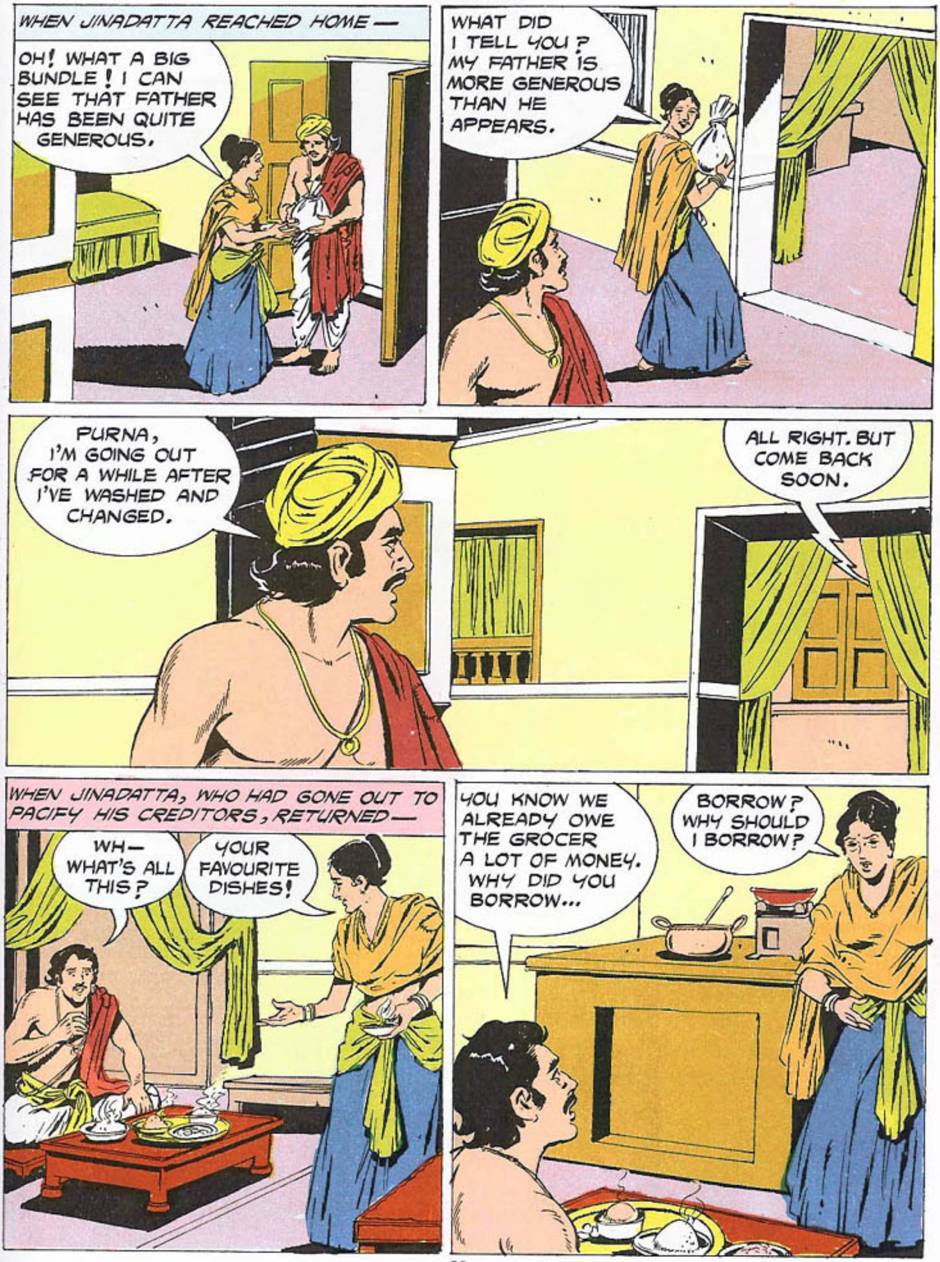

IF YOU ARE SO CONFIDENT... WELL... ALL RIGHT... I'LL GO.
YOU MUST GO TODAY! I'LL GET SOME FOOD READY FOR THE JOURNEY.
PURNA WENT INTO THE KITCHEN...
...AND CAME OUT WITH A SMALL PACKET.
HERE YOU ARE! JUST ENOUGH FOOD TO LAST YOU TILL YOU REACH FATHER'S HOUSE.
AND SO JINADATTA SET OUT.
TOWARDS NOON HE SAT UNDER A TREE BY A TANK AND OPENED HIS LUNCH PACKET.
ROASTED GRAM POWDER! GOOD PURNA DOES PAMPER ME! SHE'S PROBABLY GIVEN ME ALL THAT WAS LEFT IN THE HOUSE.
A MONK! HOW LEAN AND FEEBLE HE LOOKS. HE MUST HAVE BEEN FASTING.
HOLY SIR, PLEASE HONOUR ME BY ACCEPTING A PORTION OF MY MEAL.

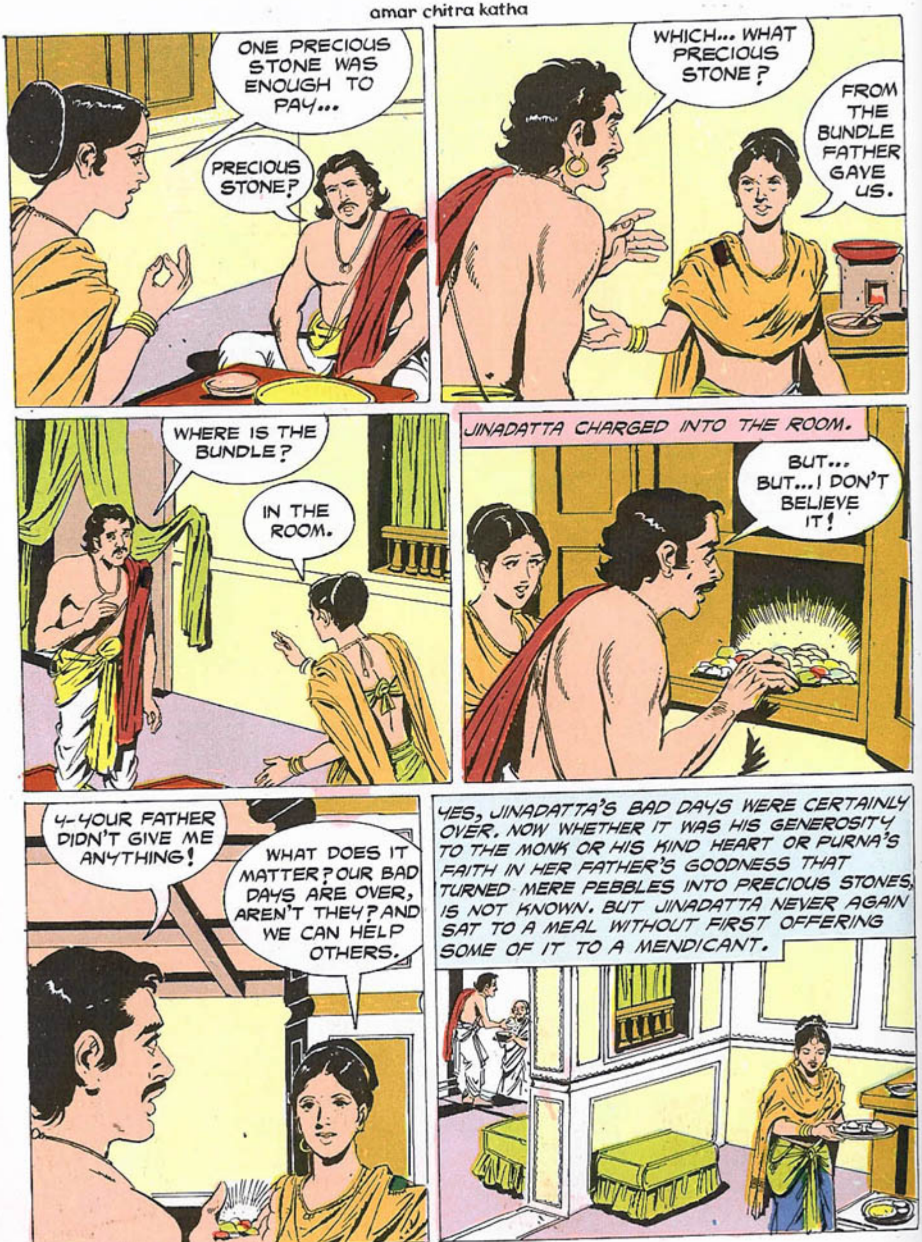

THE MONK ACCEPTED AND THE TWO SHARED THE MEAGRE MEAL.
WHEN THEY FINISHED...
... THE MONK WENT HIS WAY AND JINADATTA CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY.
WHEN HE REACHED HIS FATHER-IN-LAW'S HOUSE —
WHY IT'S JINADATTA! COME IN, COME IN.
I HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH PURNA.
PURNA IS AS WELL AS SHE COULD BE.
BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE FALLEN ON BAD DAYS. THESE SHABBY CLOTHES...
HOW THIN YOU HAVE BECOME! HAVE YOU BEEN ILL?
NOT ILL, BUT...


BUT WHAT?
I HAVE HAD A SPATE OF BAD LUCK IN BUSINESS.
HM-M! JUST AS I SUSPECTED.
WE HAVE LOST EVERYTHING BUT THE HOUSE.
I HAVE COME TO YOU FOR A LOAN, TO START AFRESH.
OH! I SEE! BUT...
HE JUST SAID HE'S BEEN HAVING A SPATE OF BAD LUCK.
WHAT'S THE USE OF GIVING HIM A LOAN NOW? HE'S SURE TO LOSE THAT TOO.
WELL, JINADATTA. I'VE JUST INVESTED ALL MY SPARE MONEY. I AM SO-O-O SORRY BUT...


I HATE TO REFUSE YOU BUT... AT THE MOMENT... I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU, I'M AFRAID.
WAIT, JINADATTA! DON'T LEAVE SO SOON. WAIT...
SHOCKED BY THE BLUNT REFUSAL...
... JINADATTA WALKED AWAY IN A DAZE.
HE WON'T REFUSE. I KNOW MY FATHER.
POOR PURNA! IF I TELL HER THE TRUTH IT WILL BREAK HER HEART.
SHE WAS SO SURE THAT HER FATHER WOULD HELP US.


WHAT'S THAT GLEAMING ON THE GROUND?
OH! THEY ARE JUST PEBBLES.
PEBBLES!
THIS SHOULD SAVE HER FROM THE FIRST SHOCK.
LATER, WHEN SHE FINDS OUT THAT THIS BUNDLE CONTAINS ONLY PEBBLES...
... I CAN ALWAYS SAY THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE SOMEWHERE.


WHEN JINADATTA REACHED HOME —
OH! WHAT A BIG BUNDLE! I CAN SEE THAT FATHER HAS BEEN QUITE GENEROUS.
WHAT DID I TELL YOU? MY FATHER IS MORE GENEROUS THAN HE APPEARS.
PURNA, I'M GOING OUT FOR A WHILE AFTER I'VE WASHED AND CHANGED.
ALL RIGHT. BUT COME BACK SOON.
WHEN JINADATTA, WHO HAD GONE OUT TO PACIFY HIS CREDITORS, RETURNED —
WH— WHAT'S ALL THIS?
YOUR FAVOURITE DISHES!
YOU KNOW WE ALREADY OWE THE GROCER A LOT OF MONEY. WHY DID YOU BORROW...
BORROW? WHY SHOULD I BORROW?


ONE PRECIOUS STONE WAS ENOUGH TO PAY...
PRECIOUS STONE?
WHICH... WHAT PRECIOUS STONE?
FROM THE BUNDLE FATHER GAVE US.
WHERE IS THE BUNDLE?
IN THE ROOM.
JINADATTA CHARGED INTO THE ROOM.
BUT... BUT... I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
Y-YOUR FATHER DIDN'T GIVE ME ANYTHING!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? OUR BAD DAYS ARE OVER, AREN'T THEY? AND WE CAN HELP OTHERS.
YES, JINADATTA'S BAD DAYS WERE CERTAINLY OVER. NOW WHETHER IT WAS HIS GENEROSITY TO THE MONK OR HIS KIND HEART OR PURNA'S FAITH IN HER FATHER'S GOODNESS THAT TURNED MERE PEBBLES INTO PRECIOUS STONES, IS NOT KNOWN. BUT JINADATTA NEVER AGAIN SAT TO A MEAL WITHOUT FIRST OFFERING SOME OF IT TO A MENDICANT.



AMAR CHITRA KATHA

PANCHARATNA
SERIES

Hard-bound with laminated cover
Five deluxe editions of Amar Chitra Katha in each
for just Rs 175

Titles available

1001 Stories of Krishna
1002 Stories of Birbal
1003 Stories from the Jatakas
1004 Stories from the Panchatantra
1005 Stories of Rama
1006 Tales of Humour
1007 More Stories from the Jatakas
1008 Stories of Shiva
1009 Devotees of Vishnu
1010 Heroes from the Mahabharata
1011 Stories from Sanskrit Dramas
1012 Great Rulers of India
1013 Brave Rajputs
1014 Ancient Tales of Wit and Wisdom
1015 Further Stories from the Jatakas
1016 Stories from the Bhagawat
1017 Buddhist Stories
1018 Stories from the Mahabharata
1019 Great Freedom Fighters

ISBN 81-7508-280-1

IBH
INDIA BOOK HOUSE PVT LTD
Mahalaxmi Chambers, 5th Floor, 22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,
Mumbai – 400 026. Tel.- 2352 5636 • Fax - 2353 8406.
E-mail: info@amarchitrakatha.com